3:Westermann E-5 (1910) 1912 FJ23 Shilluk FJ23

643

right to the throne. If all the sons of a king die, before it is the turn of one of them to become king, that family loses its royal prerogatives. A left-handed or otherwise deformed man cannot be crowned. When from such or a similar reason the son of a king fails to be crowned, his posterity loses the right to the throne.

[562]

As a rule only a man can be king; though once a queen reigned, she apparently did not command a great authority, vide page 149; and it is characteristic that in the lists given by Banholzer and Dr. Giffen her name is not mentioned.

[662]

The way in which the king is elected, vide page 122 ff. Of course frequently party intrigues are at work on these occasions, and it may have been not quite an uncommon occurrence that there were several candidates for the throne, supported by different factions; sometimes there were even two kings, residing in different places of the country.

POWER OF THE KING [651]

The power of the king was, previous to the British occupation, absolute; he disposed on life and death of his subjects. The subjects had to pay heavy taxes in cattle, dura, boats, skins for clothes, and under certain circumstances, in persons also.

JURISDICTION 671 693 685

All judicial cases may be brought before the king, with whom lies the final decision. They have an unwritten code of law, providing fixed penalties and fines. Cattle thieves were formerly killed on the spot by the owner of the stolen property. If the thief escaped, but was located with the stolen thing, the owner demanded it. In case the thief refused to give it up and the owner was unable to get it by force, he then reported to his chief, and if he failed there, the matter went to the king, who punished the man perhaps by taking his property and some girls from his village for himself.

681 567 [644]

In the case of certain infractions of the law the convict became the slave of the king, and could no more return to his home. These slaves are known as *tyɛ̀i ɔrɔ̀k* ("men of crime") or *adʒ̀rɔ̀*. The king gives to such a man a wife. Their children are slaves at the royal court and are called *adʒ̀rɔ̀*. To the male descendants of such the king gives wives, and the females are taken to be given to male members of the *adʒ̀rɔ̀* class as wives. If the king does not have enough girls in the *adʒ̀rɔ̀* class to supply all the young men with wives, he buys free girls for the purpose, their descendants become also slaves.

In some cases the criminal becomes the slave of a chief; these are also called *adʒ̀rɔ̀*.

682 672

Murder cases were tried by a court of chiefs and the king. If the man was condemned, he was disgraced in many ways before the people. Sometimes he was led about the village with a cow-rope around his neck, and then executed by hanging. If a man was executed on account of a crime, his whole family

29:Dempsey M-5 (1940-1954) 1955
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in an ajwogo to cure her. He diagnosed her illness, which actually was pneumonia, as an evil spirit inside her, and proceeded to release it by gouging a hole in her side with a broken and rusty scissors blade. It was due only to the care that the poor girl received from the indignant nuns that she was saved at all, and fully two months after her 'operation' she had not completely recovered the use of her limbs, and was reduced to crawling round the village on her hands and knees.

Fortunately, the people are coming to realize the good that proper medical treatment can do them. They are more willing to send to the local medical dispensary for assistance and, if necessary, to allow the Medical Assistant or us at the mission to send their sick into Malakal hospital. On this account the influence of the ajwogo as a general practitioner is being weakened and it will be greatly to the benefit of the Shilluk when it is destroyed altogether.

The other disciple of Nyikang, the jal yath, is a dabbler in black magic, a worker of evil. For a fee, he will undertake to bring about the death or the illness of an enemy, or an injury to his crops or cattle. Often enough the evil effects he does cause will be brought about by the old-fashioned method of poison, but to impress his client he will have recourse to the childish practice of making an image of the intended victim and sticking nails in it to demonstrate the pains he is to suffer, or causing it to waste away, when the sufferer's body will waste in a similar manner. The jal yath is undoubtedly greatly feared by the people and plays upon their fears to achieve his end. An instance of this occurred at Detwok some years ago. We employ a number of youths at the mission as gardeners, cowherds, kitchen and table boys, etc. One of this little community, the gardener, was the proud possessor of a wooden box in which he could keep his few possessions under lock and key. Since he was the only one thus blessed, the other boys used to entrust their savings to him, each keeping his modest sum, ranging from a few piastres to a pound or so, in a tobacco tin in the wooden box. One day it was discovered that the box had been opened

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and that one of the tins containing ninety piastres (about 18*s*.) had been stolen. The District Chief was called and held solemn court on the verandah of the house. He, however, could not discover the thief and therefore gave judgment that the owner of the box was responsible for the safety of the money entrusted to him and that he was to refund the missing money and to be held in custody until he did so. This seemed rather unfair on Henry, the owner of the box, since he had gained nothing from acting as banker to the rest, yet unless the thief was found there was nothing that we could do about the matter and it seemed to be closed. Two days later we were surprised to learn that one of the boys had owned up to the theft and had refunded the money. We were pleased, too, because we thought that although the boy had acted meanly in stealing his companion's savings, at least he had been man enough to come forward to save Henry from having to pay the penalty for the theft. We were speedily disillusioned as to his motive for confessing; the other boys knew perfectly well that Henry was innocent of taking the money, and they had a very strong idea who had. Accordingly they subscribed to buy a sheep which was given to the local witch doctor as a fee for finding the thief. The jal yath let it be known that he would sacrifice the sheep at a certain hour, and the moment the animal died so would the culprit; the latter had not the courage to defy the curse but promptly confessed his guilt.

When an animal is slain in sacrifice, great importance is attached to the position in which it falls. If the animal is a bull, it is not usually slain outright, but wounded by a spear thrust and allowed free. If it should wander towards the river or towards the shrine before it dies, that is taken as a sign that the sacrifice is acceptable to Nyikang. So, too, is it taken as a good omen if the beast in collapsing falls on its left side; if it should fall on its right side then the portents are unfavourable, and should it fall neither to right nor left but simply crumple up and fall forward with forefeet doubled beneath it, that would presage some terrible disaster. The actual spearing of the victim is generally done by

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So he continues his tour of inspection, galvanizing the dilatory workers into fresh activity, and then returns to the house and commences the buying of the rope and roofing poles. That occupies the best part of an hour, and then, grown wise in the ways of these children of Nyikang, he makes sure that his purchases are put away, the poles on the flat roof of the house, the rope in a store-room where the wily Shilluk cannot filch them to re-sell them to him. Then it is time to make another round of the workmen, a procedure that he will carry out yet twice more during the morning and another three times during the afternoon. At 10.30 the morning's work is finished, and the labourers go home to reassemble at half-past two. There is no respite for Pooh-Bah, however. The affairs of the mission demand his attention, another group of rope sellers have gathered, the post-boat is due the next day, and he must write to Malakal for cement and to Kodok about the wood for the brick burning. He disposes of these tasks and also manages to find time to finish his Office before lunch. The afternoon's work is a repetition of the morning's; a continual tour of the different groups, the attending to the wants of one here and another one there, with one or two visits to the house to dispose of the rope and pole sellers.

Thus one day succeeds another, and week follows week and still the work goes on. By Christmas there are fifty thousand bricks ready for burning, the foundations of the new classrooms and the teacher's house are dug, the old mud huts have been replastered and the walls of the six new ones are already well above the ground, and everybody, Pooh-Bah by no means among the least, is heartily sick of the sight of mud, whether in its natural state, or made into bricks, or built into a wall, and is only too glad of the few days' respite the Festival brings. As soon as Christmas is over, the work begins on the kiln. The base, a rectangle twenty-five feet long and fifteen feet wide, must be built with care since it has to support the weight of thirty thousand bricks. It is three feet in height and is pierced by six triangular firing tunnels, each two feet wide at the base and two feet

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one end of the compound bring Pooh-Bah hurrying from the other to add those of peacemaker and judge to his other rôles. Workmen tire of their particular jobs (water carrying is particularly hated) and demand another one. The water-carrying difficulty is not solved until a roster is formed so that everyone except the lordly brickmakers and bricklayers take their turn. Hoes begin to disappear, but that little pastime is effectively put an end to by stopping the price out of the wages of every individual in the squad concerned. After the second one disappears it is found to be too expensive.

Now it is time to fire the kiln. The six tunnels are roughly bricked up on one side and filled with firewood and straw from the other. The fires are lighted at dusk, and once they are kindled must not be allowed to go out until the firing is completed. Soon each fire is blazing merrily, and the draught forcing the fire back through the mass of dry wood and straw quickly turns each tunnel into a roaring cavern of flame. The kiln presents a grand spectacle in the darkness, as great tongues of fire lick out from the openings and billows of smoke from the wood and clouds of steam from the still drying bricks envelop the whole structure. The firing continues on one side for two nights and two days; then that side is bricked up and the other side opened and the process for firing continued for a like period. The interiors of the tunnels are before long glowing white-hot masses of fused brick, and the kiln soon becomes fiercely hot as the flames mount up, searching through each crack and cranny to reach the top of the mass. When the firing is completed, the tunnels are blocked up again, any cracks that have appeared in the walls are plastered over anew and the mass is left to cool down, a process that takes about a week. By now there are sufficient bricks to commence the second kiln and this is built in the same manner as the first. But the priest has noted with concern that the firing of the kiln has consumed far more wood than he had anticipated. The strong north wind which now blows with full force every day has helped on the fires more enthusiastically than he would have liked. He cannot go to the expense of getting more wood from Kodok, and the